Reviewing the Monopoly Status of VSNL

2591. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to review the monopoly status of Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd;

(b) whether it is a fact that VSNL is charging monopolistic rates for its services; and

(c) the steps proposed to make VSNL a competitive and customer-oriented organisation?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) Sir, there is no proposal to review the monopoly status till the year 2004.

(b) Sir, the rates for international telephone, telex and telegraph services are fixed by Government of India. Rates for value added services are fixed by VSNL and are quite competitive.

(c) VSNL has been assessed as one of the best run PSUs and is already customer oriented.

Licences for STD/ISD in Delhi

2592. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department of Telecommunication has issued licences in every area of Delhi run STD/ISD services;

(b) if so, whether the operators running these telephone booths fix functioning hours arbitrarily without keeping in view the requirements and the facility of the general public;

(c) whether Government propose to fix their working hours; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. Timings have been fixed by the Government. STD PCO franchisees are supposed to keep the STD PCOs open with minimum of 12 working hours from 8 A.M. to 8 P.M.

(c) and (d) Does not arise in view of reply to part (b) above.

Release of Telephone Directory in West Godavari District

2593. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of new telephone directories released in West Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh Telecom Circle in 1996-97;

(b) whether it is a fact that such directories are not easily available in West Godavari district;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether a fresh directory is being planned for 1997-98 in West Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh; and

(e) if so, the schedule of printing and release of an updated directory?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) No directory